



# *AMERICA SUPPORTS YOU*

## **FREEDOM WALK**

### **September 11, 2006**

### **PLANNING GUIDE**

#### Concept

- To establish a national tradition to reflect on the lives lost on September 11, renew our commitment to freedom and the values of our country and to honor our veterans, past and present.
- Non-partisan/non-exclusive event open to the general public. This is not a fundraiser for any organization, nor a platform to discuss politics or policies.

#### Organization

The key to a successful Freedom Walk is to establish a strong committee of volunteers and to involve your local politicians.

- Walks will be developed and organized in each state by local leadership and volunteers.
- Work through your Mayor's office to organize a broad-based committee.
- Funding will need to be provided by local businesses and organizations.
- Involve civic organizations (Rotary, American Legion, Knights of Columbus, VFW, etc.) and local America Supports You Grassroots Groups. See [www.AmericaSupportsYou.mil](http://www.AmericaSupportsYou.mil)
- Organize a volunteer committee to help with registration, set up and clean up. (see attached chart)
- America Supports You Freedom Walk website offers a registration site for local groups. You may use this site for participant registration or create your own. See [www.americasupportsyounil](http://www.americasupportsyounil) and click on the Freedom Walk 2006 link at the bottom of the page.

#### Time and scope

- The date is Monday, September 11, 2006. You can set the time that is most convenient for your community.
- Identify the type of event that will work best for your community. You may want to plan a walk route in a prominent part of town or around a patriotic symbol.

#### Route

- Keep your walk route under 2 miles so that it is easy for the average person to participate.
- Obtain any necessary permits.

- Coordinate with local government and police for access to public property, crowd control, parking, logistics issues, etc.
- Coordinate with local emergency medical personnel for medical coverage of your event.

### Outreach

It is important to involve as many groups as possible to participate in the Freedom Walk. The walks are non-partisan so be sure to make the invitation as diverse as possible. Some recommendations are;

- People in your community who may have lost someone on 9-11.
- Members of the military and their families.
- Local elected officials.
- Local police and fireman.
- School superintendents, principals and teachers.
- Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts.
- Local *America Supports You* Grassroots Groups. See [www.AmericaSupportsYou.mil](http://www.AmericaSupportsYou.mil)
- Local radio, TV personalities and local celebrities.
- Veterans groups (VFW, American Legion, Disabled American Veterans, PVA).

### Promotion

Once you have developed the volunteer committee and received support from your mayor or local leadership, you should develop a promotion strategy to educate people about the opportunity to be involved in the Freedom Walk.

- Register your event at [www.AmericaSupportsYou.mil](http://www.AmericaSupportsYou.mil) and click on the “Freedom Walk” link. Follow the instructions to submit the time, location, and point of contact for your local event. It will be posted on the webpage and will allow the public to search for an event in their area.
- Contact the Chamber of Commerce, convention and visitors bureau and City Hall to ask them to post the event on their calendar.
- Contact local businesses and ask them to display flyers.
- Contact mass transit organization for signage in bus stops and cab stands.
- Contact local employers and ask them to announce the event to their employees via email or by posting flyers or signage in the workplace.

### Media

The support you need from the media is two-fold. First, you need the media to help you promote the Freedom Walk and registration sites. Second, you need the media to actually cover the Freedom Walk.

- If possible, recruit a local media sponsor to help you advertise.

- Reach out to local newspapers, television and radio stations to let them know about the event.
- Try to secure free public service announcements
- Prepare a press advisory for the event and distribute to local media. You may download a template press advisory at [www.AmericaSupportsYou.mil](http://www.AmericaSupportsYou.mil).
- Prepare a press release for the day of the event. You may download a template at [www.AmericaSupportsYou.mil](http://www.AmericaSupportsYou.mil).

### Budget

Each Freedom Walk will vary in the amount of expenses that are required, it is best to partner with companies for donations. Below is a sample list of basic expenses:

- T-shirts for walkers and volunteers.
- Advertising materials.
- Rental fees for equipment such as a microphone, stage and portable potties.
- Permit fees.
- Food and water.
- Local promotion/publicity.

### Collateral Materials

Most participants will want a keepsake from your Freedom Walk.

- Freedom Walk logos and designs are available on [www.AmericaSupportsYou.mil](http://www.AmericaSupportsYou.mil).
- You can purchase t-shirts for the walk, or you can download artwork to take to your local vendor.

### Program

As this is the five year anniversary of the tragic attacks on our country, you might consider a balance in your program that is both reflective and forward looking. Reflective of the lives lost and forward looking to the hope of our great country and the military members who defend our freedom. Items to consider:

- How will you recognize those people who were directly affected by 9-11, military service members or their families?
- Who will you invite to speak?
- Who will be your master of ceremonies?
- Will you have a band or musical group perform patriotic music?
- Will you ask a chaplain, clergyman or minister to give an invocation?
- Will you involve anyone who has a connection to the victims of September 11, or perhaps local members of the military?

## Resources

- A platform or riser, a podium and microphone for the program.
- Directional signs, as well as banners and signs that direct people to your event. The ASY website [www.AmericaSupportsYou.mil](http://www.AmericaSupportsYou.mil) has a Freedom Walk logo and template that you can download.
- Water and tables for water stations along the walk route.
- First aid personnel.

## Volunteer support

Volunteers will be the key to your success. We recommend a lead and back up volunteer for every assignment and then a team of support volunteers. Areas of responsibility:

- Liaison to the mayor's office.
- Finance officer.
- Promotions.
- Media liaison.
- VIP escorts.
- Set up and staff water distribution points.
- Set up and staff on-site registration desk and distribute t-shirts to participants.
- Give directions and information to participants.
- Clean up.

## Clean up

- Use volunteers to help clean up trash.
- Contact city sanitation for extra trashcans or dumpsters.
- Schedule a special trash pick up after the event.

## Follow up

- Send thank-you letters to sponsors, volunteers, and people involved in the program.
- Send out photos and your Freedom Walk press release to local media outlets.
- Send photos and press clippings to America Supports You at the following address:  
America Supports You Freedom Walk, C/O 1350 I St. NW, Suite 200, Washington, D.C. 20005.
- Send final numbers of participants via  
<http://www.americasupportsyounet.org/americasupportsyounet/freedomwalk/>
- Keep track of all information to ease planning for next year.